

16 Dec 68

COINS User Training Panel

Activities - August - December 1968

1. The Charter of the Panel called for certain products by 15 December 1968. We have not been able to furnish any of these products in final form. Panel members have, however, been busily and usefully occupied with training tasks. This report attempts to record what has been accomplished, and what we intend to do in the near future. The format of the report matches that of the Panel Charter. Pertinent headings are quoted, but comments are made only where necessary.

2. "Objectives

NSA review completed

.....provide analysts with.....

- a. The fields and code conventions available in COINS files.
- b. Remote terminal query procedures.
- c. Principal conventions for the system which may constrain the user.
- d. A description of the content, scope, and limitations of the information contained in the files in the COINS Experiment including examples of how the information can be used."

Comment: Efforts have largely been on the objectives a, b, c and not on d. For d. to be achieved in the broadest sense, the office responsible for the file would have to do the training, not a system-oriented group. The informational content of a file is known best by a sponsor or heavy user; scope and limitations of the information are apparent to persons who know not only the particular file, but who also know well other sources of similar information.

3. "Tasks

- a. Design and develop the training techniques and course curriculum to be used by the participating agencies.
- b. Develop a single COINS users manual containing the data listed in Inclosure 1."

Comment: A single COINS users manual has not been developed, and the Panel doubts that it is desirable at this time. Since relatively little firm and final material has been written in any agency, the development of a single manual is at least premature. See 4a(1) below.

Secondary referral to NSA by DIA, ER&L/FWG; 12/18/06.

DIA Review Completed.

State Dept. review completed

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- "c. Develop additional training aids as required.
- d. Develop specifications for a common but limited Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) capability to be included in the computer systems of participating agencies. (See Inclosure 2)"

Comment: With each agency introducing a new computer it is hard to say whether or when CAI capability will be possible. A central computer which operates on a message-and-response basis, as the NSA Univac 490 does and the 494 will do, would very likely be too slow for practical CAI. The word "limited" may admit what we are working toward and may someday have: system and file information stored in the local computer, capable of being queried by a user, primarily for the purpose of reinforcing and updating his knowledge, but possibly for instruction. To call this CAI, however, is a degradation of the term.

4. "Reporting

- a. The Chairman will submit the following products to the COINS Manager by 15 December 1968.

(1) COINS Users Manual."

Comment: The Panel reports the following accomplishments by agency

NSA: About one-half inch of material has been prepared which introduces the systems and some of the files of each agency. The version of 6 Aug 68 has had a 13 Nov revision to the part describing the NSA system. The parts describing DIA and CIA systems need revision. Five NSA files were described; all have been redone, and two more done for the first time. Five DIA files were re-described by NSA in an attempt at condensation; one of these condensations is highly imperfect. Three CIA files were described; the descriptions have not yet been used, but they seem adequate. NSA material must be rewritten almost completely because of the coming of the Univac 494 and the TILE language. This work is under way.

DIA: Use of contractors produces some fine informational material. Production does, however, take a long time, and the product tends to be bulky. Further, the contractor manual takes into account only the DIA user, system, and files. While it may be used by others, NSA and CIA have so far preferred to put together their own instructional material about other agency systems. An accepted contractor-produced manual is to be distributed by the end of January, 1969.

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DIA is attempting to substitute computer-held file information for printed representation of files. The OPTAN file information has been in the computer since mid-summer; a push is now on to get several other files in. Completion of currently maintained files is expected by 31 December.

CIA: In August, CIA published a manual on the COINS portion of the internal CIA Headquarters on-line system. Much of the material contained in this manual can also be used by other COINS participating agencies as a basis for developing their manuals on how to query the CIA system.

CIA Headquarters has also developed machine stored/on-line file descriptions which can be thought of as a beginning step in the development of a CAI capability.

Draft manuals have been prepared on the communications procedures for addressing files in other agencies and on the procedures for using stored (canned) queries on the DIA system. The latter manual contains numerous examples of stored queries and detailed DIA file descriptions. By the first of the year, additional draft manuals will be prepared on NSA and NPIC query procedures and files.

The preparation of manuals on the non-CIA COINS systems has been somewhat hampered by the inability to levy test queries on the other systems, i.e., the communications link and associated software are in the final stages of debugging and the draft manuals that have been prepared cannot be tested out until the communications network is operational.

NPIC:

1. By the end of December, NPIC will make available to the other COINS participants file descriptions and procedures for querying NPIC COINS files.

General Comments:

✓ a. There has been no attempt by the Panel to agree on format, terminology or content of their individual manuals. This is deliberate. At this stage we need variety, ideas, and some opportunity to illustrate and test them. We do not need the grind of coordination and concurrent. There are so few workers that all their energies should be devoted to getting something out, with refinements to come later.

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b. Preparation of final training material has been hampered by inability to test interagency material already written. The CIA comment above is true for other agencies as well. Even within one agency (NSA) the 490 system seemed so overloaded as to discourage further training for a system of limited life. Pending changes to the NSA hardware and language called for new training material. Writing has begun, but since it is not yet possible for trainers to test their material, final publication cannot take place.

"(2) Curriculum for COINS USER Training Course."

Comment: Although there is no common curriculum, all COINS trainers work toward the same objectives:

- a. general understanding of the COINS system;
- b. acquaintance with the local console;
- c. acquaintance with files;
- d. formation of queries for the local system;
- e. formation of queries for remote systems.

Objective b. is poorly achieved in NSA and DIA because of too few consoles available for instruction and practice.

Objective c. is only as well satisfied as published file information allows. No matter how good the instructional material is, the user will learn more from use than he will from instruction.

Objective d. is poorly achieved because each agency knows more about its own files than it can communicate to trainers and users in other agencies. The relative inability, up to now, to query files in other agencies has kept file knowledge from growing by use.

(3) "Training Aids"

Nothing significant has been developed except written materials.

(4) "CAI Specifications"

Nothing significant has been developed, unless you wish to call computer-stored information about the files a beginning of CAI. This is going on in DIA, CIA and NSA, but not much is available at this writing.

"b. Submit a monthly report to the COINS Project Manager"
This has been discharged by submitting the same summary of each Panel meeting which is given back to Panel members. In addition, the proximity of the Panel Chairman and the COINS Manager allows frequent verbal reporting.

5. The Panel feels that it has reported to the COINS Manager only if it has also stated the sum of the intentions of trainers in the several agencies. Their individual reports follow.

A. NSA

1. Put at least one, and possibly several, file into machine records. They will be used either for machine production of a catalog of file information, or for holding in the machine itself for selective retrieval by a user.

2. Continue writing training material on TILF. Since language will probably continue in development and debugging through the introductory period of the 494, the appearance of anything except draft training material before April 68 is unlikely.

3. Search for a place to give training which includes consoles, or discover a method of giving training on consoles which are located primarily for operational use.

B. CIA

1. When the communications link with DIA becomes operational in late December, the various draft manuals prepared on the non-CIA systems will be tested out and reissued in final form.

2. Additional training sessions and console demonstrations will be arranged to prepare CIA analysts for the operational test scheduled to begin in April 1969.

C. DIA

1. Put file descriptions on computer.

2. Acquaint local analysts with other agency files and their application.

3. Train users in use of Extract Mode for expanded application as a tool in research and intelligence analysis.

D. NPIC

The manuals developed by CIA Headquarters for querying non-NPIC files will be utilized, with necessary modification, for training NPIC analysts. With the assistance of the CIA COINS Subsystem Manager, NPIC will conduct information training sessions for its analysts in preparation for the operational test.

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E. NIC

The Technical Memorandum of Agreement (TMA) on "User Education" charges DIA with the responsibility of training NIC personnel. The NIC-COINS Representative has received query procedure orientation at NSA, CIA, and DIA. Detailed instruction will be provided by DIA when NIC terminal becomes operational, an event long delayed due to the lack of power supplies. The estimated IOC month is January 1969.

f. STATE

There are 25 people to be trained, and training will start sometime after the receipt of the DIA Extract Mode Manual, expect at the end of January.

General:

1. The COINS User Training Panel sees itself as possibly a natural candidate for being the public relations arm of COINS. Once the system is up and available and the training job is under control, it might have valuable by-products that could be used to attract favorable attention to COINS, and hence attract additional users, files, and use. At the moment, however, all members of the Panel seem heavily occupied with the immediate tasks of getting the system described for the first users.

2. The utility of COINS to a wider range of analysts will increase only as the geographic and subject coverage of the file increases. Presently, there is perhaps over-concentration on one geo-political area.

3. Analysts in charge of files need to be brought into the training process in some fashion. Thinking that personal appearance before the small groups we envision for COINS training may be too wasteful of their time, the Panel will investigate the availability and usefulness of movies or TV recordings of briefings by file experts.

4. While not particularly in the province of the trainers, they see the desirability of standardization and commonality among COINS files. Their own experience in facing similar concepts expressed in various ways, or identical data labels with diverse meanings, may be a valuable input to anyone seriously concerned about standards.

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